

BENHS FIELD MEETINGS

Tadnoll Heath, Dorset, 23 May 1993

Leader: Mick Parker. Six members turned up for this meeting on a Dorset Trust for Nature Conservation Reserve. The conditions were fine and sunny but rather windy. The assembled group took the main path through the reserve which is mainly dry heath, leading to a small copse of birch, *Betula pendula* Roth, and gorse *Ulex europaeus* L., scrub which afforded some shelter from the wind. Here large numbers of green hairstreak, *Callophrys rubi* (L.), congregated. Further down the track we entered meadowland with cuckoo flower, *Cardamine pratensis* L., and meadow buttercup, *Ranunculus acris* L. being dominant with attendant orange tips. *Anthocharis cardamines* (L.) and green-veined whites, *Pieris napi* (L.). Unfortunately the wind was too strong to note anything on the swaying flowers. Sweeping became the order of the day but resulted in a rather disappointing list. The hoverfly list reached 16 species, all common. The meeting ended with members dispersing to sheltered areas of the reserve, but no worthwhile species were taken as a result.

Mount Caburn NNR, Glynde, Sussex, 19 June 1993

Leader: David C. Lees. A small but diverse assemblage of members (see Fig. 1) turned up for the field meeting at the NNR of Mount Caburn, near Glynde, E. Sussex, greeted by good sunny daytime weather. This site has been monitored for butterflies for the last 9 years but other insects are less well known, and so it was good to have a mixture of beetle, moth and fly expertise. The night meeting for light trapping attracted just one member (Derek Coleman) in addition to the leader. The light was not visible from Glynde so no local interest in the goings-on on



Fig. 1. Three members and a visitor perch on the precipitous forget-me-not covered slopes of Mount Caburn. Left to right: A. W. Jones, D. C. Lees, P. J. Hodge and R. A. Jones.

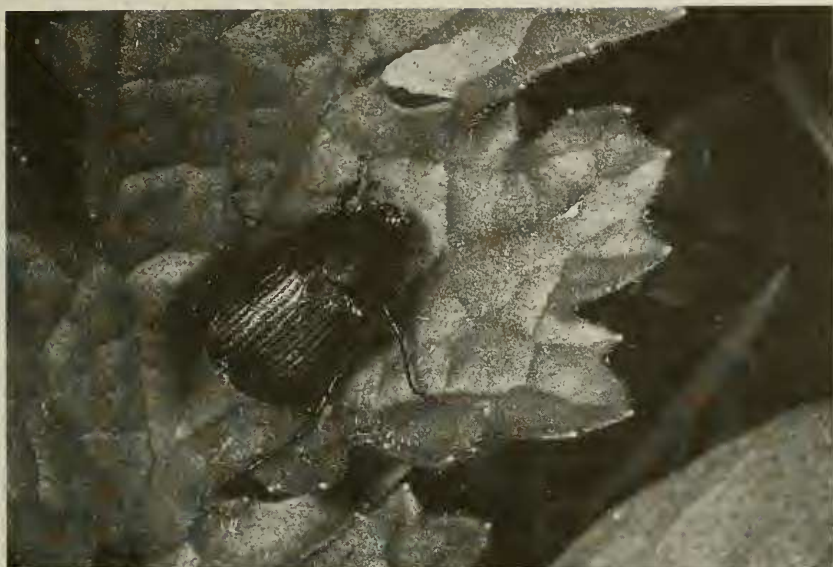


Fig. 2. *Omaloipia ruricola*, one of several of these small chafers found flying across the turf. This specimen is of the dark form, without the paler discs of the elytra. Photo: R. A. Jones.

this iron age hill fort was stirred up, in marked contrast to a memorable evening in 1992 (when 'Did aliens land on Mount Caburn?' subsequently appeared on a *Sussex Express* placard).

It was pleasing to turn up nine scarce or notable beetles, plus one RDB3 beetle, *Smicronyx reichi* (Gyll.), and one notable empid fly. The mordellid beetle *Tomoxia bucephala* Costa was neatly netted by Richard Jones as we returned to the cars just outside the reserve next to a house which had a quantity of felled timber. Mount Caburn was confirmed as one of the few Sussex sites for the phycitine pyralid *Pempelia obductella* (Zell.) spinnings being locally common among marjoram. The night was clear and temperatures dropped quite rapidly, only 55 species in 11 families being observed. The highlight of the night meeting was the seldom observed nocturnal flight, unique among British zygaenids, of males of the scarce forester moth just after 11 p.m. (Jackson, R. A. 1959. Some observations on *Adscita globulariae* (Hb.) the scarce forester: Lepidoptera (Zygaenidae), *Entomologist* 92: 111-115).

Total species recorded were: Coleoptera 53 spp. in 16 families; Diptera 28 spp. in 8 families; Hemiptera 10 spp. in 4 families, and Lepidoptera 58 spp. in 12 families.

In the list that follows, more interesting or notable species only are given. Conservation status ratings are given as appropriate.

Coleoptera. Carabidae: *Lebia chlorocephala* (Hoffmannsegg) Nb. Scarabaeidae: *Euheptaulacus villosus* (Gyll.) Na, *Omaloipia ruricola* (F.) Nb (Fig. 2). Coccinellidae: *Scymnus schmidtii* Fürsch Nb. Chysomelidae: *Cryptocephalus aureolus* Suff. Nb, *C. bilineatus* (L.) Nb, *Epitrix atropae* Foud. Nb. Curculionidae: *Trachyploeus alternans* Gyll. Nb, *Smicronyx reichi* (Gyll.) RDB3.

Diptera. Empididae: *Platypalpus leucothrix* (Strobl) N. Syrphidae: *Cheilosia impressa* Loew. Conopidae: *Thecophora atra* (F.).

Hemiptera. Cydnidae: *Sehirus luctuosus* Muls. & Rey (on forget-me-not), *Thyreocoris scarabaeoides* (L.). Tingidae: *Agramma laeta* (Fall.) (on sedges).

Lepidoptera. Zygaenidae: *Adscita globulariae* (Hübner). Na. Epermeniidae: *Epermenia insecurella* (Stt.). Coleophoridae: *Coleophora lixella* Zell. Pyralidae: *Phycitodes binaevella* (Hübner.), *Pempelia obductella* (Zell.) (larvae on *Origanum vulgare* L.), *Hypochalcia ahenella* ([D. & S.]), *Opsibotys fuscalis* ([D. & S.]). Pterophoridae: *Marasmarcha lunaedactyla* (Haw.) (larva on *Ononis spinosa* L.). Geometridae: *Catarhoe cuculata* (Hufn.) (1), *Epirrhoe galiata* ([D. & S.]), *Perizoma flavofasciata* (Thunb.), *P. albulata* ([D. & S.]), *Eupithecia subumbrata* ([D. & S.]). Noctuidae: *Pyrrhia umbra* (Hufn.), *Cucullia verbasci* (L.) (larvae on *Verbascum thapsus* L.), *Apamea sublustris* (Esp.).

Dinton Pastures Country Park, Berkshire, 23 April 1994

Leaders: **Paul Waring** and **David Young**. The first field meeting of the year was held at Dinton Pastures in the late afternoon and evening of 23 April. The leaders were joined by 15 members and friends, most of whom stayed on from Brian Baker's very successful clearwing workshop, which was attended by over 40 people. We started with a walk round the park, during which trees and shrubs were beaten for larvae, before we retired for a most enjoyable meal in the local pub, the Jolly Farmer, just half a mile up the road from the entrance to Dinton Pastures. Afterwards the park staff provided a pick-up truck which greatly assisted us in reaching the less accessible parts of the park with light-traps, generators and other equipment. We were also supplied with walkie-talkie



Fig. 1 Dinton Pastures nocturnal session, 23 April 1994. Left to right: Martin Harvey and Martin Townsend examining beating tray by light of Robinson trap, with David Gibbs onlooking, Paul Waring with radio and Peter Chandler pooting from light trap.

radios so that the various mothing groups could be kept informed as the moths arrived. The moon clouded over and the temperature at dusk was 9 °C, after a dry day but at 21.50 hours there was a clap of thunder and the rain began. We kept on trapping until the increasingly heavy rain forced us to pack up. As in many places at this date in 1994, numbers of moths were low, with light trap catches struggling to get into double figures. Only nine species of larger moths were recorded at light but ten more were added as larvae. Moth species recorded as adults included, in order of appearance, the lunar marbled brown *Drymonia ruficornis* (Hufn.), common Quaker *Orthosia cerasi* (F.), Hebrew character *Orthosia gothica* (L.), early thorn *Selenia dentaria* (F.), frosted green *Polyphlocia ridens* (F.) scorched carpet *Ligdia adustata* (D. & S.), brindled pug *Eupithecia abbreviata* Steph., oak-tree pug *Eupithecia dodoneata* Guen., and small Quaker *Orthosia cruda* (D. & S.).

Species recorded as larvae included the winter moth *Operophtera brumata* (L.), green pug *Chloroclystis rectangulata* (L.) and early moth *Theria primaria* (Haw.) from blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* L., the common emerald *Hemithea aestivaria* (Hübner) mottled umber *Erannia defoliaria* (Cl.), pale brindled beauty *Apocheima pilosaria* and short-cloaked *Nola cucullatella* (L.) from common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* Jacq., the light emerald *Campaea margaritata* (L.) from field maple *Acer campestre* L., the sallow *Xanthia icteritia* (Hufn.) from grey willow *Salix cinerea* L. agg. and a larva of the square-spot rustic *Xestia xanthographa* (D. & S.) was found on an unidentified grass-stem after dark.

Peter Chandler collected some Diptera from the light traps and these are being added to the records for the site (see *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.* 7: 118–126). Two ground-hoppers *Tetrix undulata* (Sow.) jumped onto Gavin Boyd's sheet and one was retained and later identified by him.

Aldbury Common, Hertfordshire, 11 June 1994

Leaders: Keith Alexander and Andy Foster. A group of nine members and friends spent the morning on Aldbury Common and moved across to Frithsden Beeches for the afternoon. The day was memorable for the large numbers of the hoverfly *Brachyopa pilosa* Coll. present, particularly at Frithsden, and even *Brachypalpus laphriformis* (Fall.) was plentiful at Aldbury. These are nationally scarce relict old forest species and amply rewarded the selection of these areas of the National Trust's Ashridge Estate as sites of considerable potential for such insects. The uncommon deadwood-breeding craneflies *Ctenophora pectinicornis* (L.) and *Dictenidia bimaculata* (L.) were also noted in both areas.

The large old beeches and oaks of Aldbury Common also produced a good range of nationally scarce beetles associated with decaying timber, including *Tillus elongatus* (L.) on a standing dead beech which had lost most of its bark, *Eledona agricola* (Herbst) in the remains of the bracket fungus *Laetiporus sulphureus* (Bull. ex Fr.) on a live ancient oak, *Xyleborus dryographus* (Ratz.) in galleries within the bark of felled beech trunks, exit holes of *Agrilus pannonicus* (Pill. & Mitt.) in the bark of a further old oak, and a single *Ernoporus fagi* (F.) which was caught in a sweep net. Foliage-feeding beetles included the scarce *Zeugophora subspinosus* (F.) and *Phytodecta decemnotata* (Marsh.) on aspen. The most interesting soldier beetle of the day was *Podabrus alpinus* (Payk.) which appears to be the first modern record for the county. Other orders were not totally neglected and included brown tree ant *Lasius brunneus* (Latr.) and the sub-cortical bug *Xylocoris cursitans* (Fall.).

Diptera were very much the feature of Frithsden Beeches, with other orders making a poorer showing. In addition to the *Brachyopa pilosa*, Mycetophilidae were also

particularly well-represented. Beetles did however include the uncommon *Rhizophagus nitidulus* (F.) as well as *Xyleborus dryographus*.

We would like to thank the National Trust Countryside Manager Graeme Cannon for stimulating the visit and the Area Warden Don Otter for his company on the day.

Nunhead Cemetery, London SE15, 9 July 1994

Leader **R. A. Jones**. Two members and one visitor joined the leader on a warm and sunny day when ten species of common butterfly were on the wing and visiting flowers. Nunhead Cemetery is on the very edge of 'Surrey', VC 17, in the central tetrad 'M' of the 10-km square TQ37 and ironically several of these records were new! These included the large skipper, holly blue, green-veined white and red admiral. Roger Hawkins was similarly looking for new Orthoptera records and both the oak bush cricket, *Meconema thalassinum* (De Geer) and speckled bush cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima* (Bosc) were found. Buddleja bushes attracted the large hoverfly *Volucella zonaria* (Poda) and males of *V. pellucens* (L.) hovered above the party.

A small *Prunus* tree in a clearing seemed to be attracting a number of specimens of *Chrysotoxum festivum* (L.) to its leaves where they rested a short time, darting out and back again as if examining passing insects. The few specimens captured were males, suggesting, perhaps, that they were waiting for females. An unusual find was *Cheilosia soror* (Zett.) a scarce chalk downland species, the larvae of which have been reported from truffles. Nunhead's claim to fame, the Colydiid beetle *Cicones undata* Guér.-Mén., associated with the sooty bark disease fungus on dead and dying sycamores, was present at a number of sites. Some interesting beetles found



Fig 1. Posing in front of some overgrown Victorian monuments in Nunhead Cemetery, left to right: R. A. Jones, A. J. Halstead, A. W. Jones and R. D. Hawkins.



Fig. 2. The summer chafer *Amphimallon solstitialis* found roosting at a path edge on overhanging vegetation. Photo: R. A. Jones.

included the longhorns *Strangalia maculata* (Poda) and *Clytus arietis* (L.), the click beetle *Athous campyloides* Newman and the summer chafer, *Amphimallon solstitialis* (L.). The Cemetery's first rubytail wasp record was for *Omalus auratus* (L.) and Andrew Halstead recorded 13 species of sawfly.

Richmond Park, Surrey, 6 August 1994

Leaders: **Mark Parsons** and **Graham Collins**. This meeting was the third annual meeting at Richmond Park and proved to be popular, with ten members and guests attending. Our intention was to attempt to relocate the crimson underwings (*Catocala* spp.) last recorded from the park at the end of the previous century. Large quantities of sugar were applied and many light traps run but, needless to say, there was no sign of even *Catocala nupta* L. (red underwing). The moths provided a few additions to the park list and included the migrant *Rhodometra sacraria* L. (vestal); *Parascotia fuliginaria* L. (waved black), still increasing its range in Surrey; *Coenobia rufa* Haw. (small rufous); and *Cerapteryx graminis* L. (antler), in rather greater numbers than is usual in the south-east of England. More interesting species amongst the microlepidoptera were: *Pediasia contaminella* Hüb., *Psoricoptera gibbosella* Zell., and *Caloptilia populetorum* Zell. Probably the most spectacular catch of the evening were two specimens of the huge longhorn beetle *Prionus coriarius* L., a species only recorded from the park on one previous occasion this century, that last year. Other interesting beetles included: *Tomoxia bucephala* Costa, *Metoecus paradoxus* L., and *Mordellistena neuwaldeggiana* Panz.; the latter probably new to vice-county 17, Surrey. We would like to thank the park authorities for their assistance in holding this meeting.

Abernethy Forest RSPB reserve, Inverness-shire, 13 August 1994

Leader: Paul Waring. This was a joint meeting with Butterfly Conservation, as part of their Landrover-sponsored Woodland Campaign, and also included the Highland Biological Recording Group. This meeting was hosted by the RSPB, whom the BENHS assisted in the purchase of this reserve. The meeting provided an opportunity for BENHS members to explore the Caledonian pine forest, birch woodland and heather moorland which this reserve now protects.

During the afternoon the party of 14 explored Tulloch Moor on the southern edge of the forest (NH9616, altitude 200 m). The twin-spot carpet *Perizoma didymata* (L.) was numerous amongst the heathers, freshly emerged Manchester treble-bars *Carsia sororiata* (Hübner) and worn July belle *Scotopteryx luridata plumbaria* (F.) were seen. Three nearly full grown larvae of the light knotgrass *Acronicta menyanthidis* (Esp.) were found basking on the ling heather *Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull. A full-grown emperor moth larva *Pavonia pavonia* (L.), of the pink-warted rather than yellow-warted form, was seen and several larvae of the northern oak eggar *Lasiocampa quercus callunae* Palmer, two of which had died of a virus disease. Some stands of bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* L. amongst the pines *Pinus sylvestris* L. were searched for adults of the Rannoch looper *Semiothisa brunneata* (Thunb.), which had been plentiful two weeks previously, but the only moths seen in the search were numerous northern spinach *Eulithis populata* L. and July highflyer *Hydriomena furcata* (Thunb.), the larvae of which also feed on bilberry. In addition larvae of the broom-tip moth *Chesias rufata* (F.) were found by Mike Britton, on broom *Cytisus scoparius* (L.) Link growing between Nethy Bridge and the Loch Garten Osprey Centre.



Fig. 1. The afternoon group at Abernethy Forest, 13 August 1994. Left to right: Steve Moran, Gordon Ramel, Stewart and Ruth Taylor, Mike Britton, Robert Hoare, Mr & Mrs Rich Austin, Jimmy McKellar, Gus Jones, Dr MacBean and Gary Roberts (Paul Waring behind camera).

Micro-lepidoptera seen during the day included mines of *Stigmella lapponica* (Wocke) and *S. confusella* (Wood) (Nepticulidae) which were abundant on the birch trees on Tulloch Moor. The Yponomeutid *Argyresthia goedartella* (L.) was beaten in numbers from the birches. Two or three of the plume moth *Stenoptilia pterodactyla* (L.) were encountered by the car-park at Tulloch Moor along with the pyrale *Agriphila tristella* (D. & S.). The Tortricoid *Olethreutes palustrana* (Lien. & Zell.), very much a northern species, was seen on the Moor.

A single *Cedestis subfasciella* (Steph.) (Yponomeutidae) was disturbed from a pine tree in Abernethy Forest, several *Epinotia ramella* (L.) were flushed from birches and *Agriphila straminella* (L.) was seen amongst the trees.

A number of beetles (Coleoptera) and bugs (Hemiptera) were recorded on the Moor, of which the more noteworthy were the green tiger beetle *Cicindela campestris* L. and the Carabids *Carabus glabratus* Payk. and *Notiophilus aquaticus* (L.) the first two as dead remains. Fourteen species of Hemiptera were recorded including the local mirid *Globiceps dispar* (Boh.). The common lizard *Lacerta vivipara* Jacq. was seen and a predated egg-shell of the capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* L. was found amongst the heathers (det. Stewart Taylor).

In the grounds of Abernethy Forest Lodge (NJ020160, altitude 300 m) at the end of the afternoon, the local mirid bug *Bothynotus pilosus* (Boh.) was amongst ten species of Hemiptera recorded and two pupae of the silphid beetle *Necrodes littoralis* (L.) were found by Steve Moran under a brick in a small dumping area. The pupae were reared and an adult emerged on 19.viii.1994. The common rhagionid fly *Rhagio lineola* F. was on the wing.

At dusk the party was swelled by another two guests and a Robinson trap and two Heath traps were set up in the edge of the pine forest at Rynettin, (NJ015143, altitude



Fig. 2. Exploring Tulloch Moor, 13 August 1994.

320 m) where scattered silver birch *Betula pendula* Roth. and bilberry were present among the heathers. The main objective was to see if the cousin german *Paradiarsia sobrina* (Dup.) occurs in this part of the site. Four of these moths were recorded, all at the Robinson trap, even though it was a cold night (5 °C at dusk and 3 °C when we packed up at midnight). Several grey mountain carpet *Entephria caesiata* (D. & S.), juniper pug *Eupithecia pusillata* (D. & S.) and neglected rustic *Xestia castanea* (Esp.) and singletons of the red carpet *Xanthorhoe munitata* (Hübner) and suspected *Parastichtis suspecta* (Hübner) were noted amongst other moths in the traps but the only moth to food bait was a single barred red *Hylaea fasciaria* (L.) on one of the wine ropes. The discovery of the cousin german among scattered old birch is of interest because the species is thought by some authorities to prefer areas of young regrowth, which was not so much in evidence here.

Several specimens of the tortricoids *Eana osseana* (Scop.) and *Rhopobota naevana* (Hübner) were seen flying at dusk and coming to the light traps and the latter was also common on Tulloch Moor. The Scotch argus butterfly *Erebia aethiops* (Esp.) was present in some numbers over a wide area, especially on the edges of the forest adjacent to moorland, as at Rynettin.

About 30 species from the other invertebrate orders were recorded at Rynettin, ranging from common ones such as the common earwig *Forficula auricularia* L. and the lacewing *Wesmaelius betulinus* (Ström) to the somewhat local crane fly *Pedicia rivosa* (L.) and mirid bug *Polymerus unifasciatus* (F.)

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank Stewart Taylor, site manager for the RSPB, and Steve Moran of the Highland Biological Recording Group for their help in organizing this field meeting. It was part of the Butterfly Conservation Woodland Campaign which was sponsored by Landrover who provided a vehicle for Gary Roberts, one of BC's press officers, to attend the meeting and assist with local transport. Landrover are also sponsoring the RSPB. The meeting was featured in a short advance piece in the Highland and Moray edition of the *Press and Journal* of 9 August 1994.

I would like to thank everyone who supported this meeting and made it such an enjoyable one. Robert Hoare determined the micro-lepidoptera, Gordon Ramel the hoverflies (Syrphidae) and ants (Formicidae), and Steve Moran the other invertebrates.

The records of this meeting have been sent to: Stewart Taylor, RSPB, Abernethy Forest Lodge, Nethy Bridge, Inverness-shire PH25 3EF; Steve Moran and Jimmy McKellar, Highland Biological Recording Group, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3ED; James Stewart, local Lepidoptera recorder, 15 Strathspey Drive, Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3EY, and Gordon Ramel, The Bug Club, 24 East John Walk, Exeter EX1 2EW.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The J. V. Blachford collection of Coleoptera.—Readers of the *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History* may like to know that the ownership of this collection has changed. Because the University of Bath has found it difficult in recent years to find the resources to care properly for the Blachford Collection, the decision was taken earlier this year to pass the collection on to the Bristol City Museum.

For those interested, the appropriate contact there is: Mr R. J. Barnett, City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Queen's Road, Bristol BS8 1RL.